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Questions ~ Concerns? Call State Representative Lou Esposito at
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At Your Service

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OUR CHILDREN AND SCHOOLS

SCHOOL NUTRITION

Childhood obesity and poor nutrition are growing concerns for parents and doctors. We listened and **restricted the types of beverages that can be sold to students in schools**—artificial sweeteners banned, and the amount of sugar per ounce is limited to 4 grams. We also provided financial incentives for school boards that certify their school cafeterias meet the State Department of Education standards.

HEALTHY KIDS INITIATIVE

In order to offer **affordable healthcare for 71,000 children** currently uncovered, we have expanded the HUSKY Program. HUSKY A guarantees that children will receive all necessary screening diagnostic services, and treatment. In addition, we've reduced tedious paperwork for families to simplify enrollment.



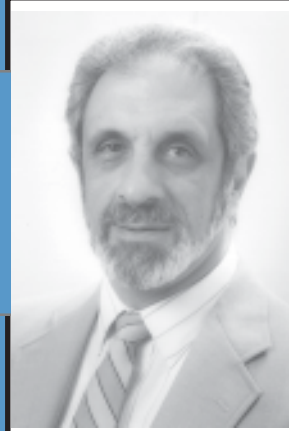
UNDERAGE DRINKING

Studies show that 77% of high school students report they obtained alcohol in their homes, with or without their parents' consent. A new law makes it **a crime to knowingly allow underage alcohol possession on private property**, or not make reasonable efforts to prevent such activity. Exemptions for your own children, or for religious or medical reasons, were granted.

BULLYING POLICIES IN SCHOOLS

In an effort to reduce the incidence of bullying among school children, the General Assembly passed sHB 5563. It expands the definition of bullying to include incidents of harassment that occur on the school bus and **strengthens local policies** to enable students to report bullying acts anonymously.

STATE REPRESENTATIVE



LOUIS P. ESPOSITO, JR.

LEGISLATIVE REPORT ~ 2006 ~

116th Assembly District - West Haven

BRINGING OUR FAIR SHARE HOME

Dear Neighbor,

This year the General Assembly focused on "Breaking Ground," our vision for the 2006 session. Tax relief, transportation, job growth, access to health care and our children's futures were the hallmarks of this session.

In one of the shortest sessions on record, my fellow legislators rolled up their sleeves and crafted bills that were ready for debate and worthy of passage. This year was a year of creative and bold solutions.

We passed a strong budget without raising taxes and I made sure West Haven received its fair share. I have included in this newsletter highlights of programs that will help our city. Please do not hesitate to contact me if I may be of assistance or provide further information on any of these programs.

Sincerely,

MORE MONEY FOR EDUCATION: West Haven schools will receive almost \$100,000 more in Education Grants this year, bringing the total to **\$36,473,924 in state aid**. In addition, Adult Education will receive \$131,709, and School Transportation almost \$1 million.

MORE MONEY FOR LOSS OF TAXES: West Haven will receive an **18% increase** of \$1,270,233 for loss of taxes on state property, colleges, and hospitals.

MONEY FOR THE UNIVERSITY OF NEW HAVEN: I am very pleased to have initiated and led efforts to get an initial installment of **\$1,000,000 in state bonding** to break ground for the new Henry Lee Institute for Forensic Science at the University of New Haven. Three million dollars more has been earmarked for the rest of the project.



TOWN ROAD AID:

This year West Haven will receive **\$323,014** in road grants and capital improvements, a 7% increase over last year.

PROPERTY TAX CREDIT:

As we continue to struggle with rising property taxes, we have raised the property tax credit on the state income tax in year 2006 **from \$400 to \$500**.

MUNICIPAL TAX RELIEF:

Due to a budget surplus, the General Assembly was able to return money to the municipalities this year. West Haven will receive an **extra \$659,305!**

21ST CENTURY TRANSPORTATION PLAN

Clearly, a major accomplishment of this session was the 10-year \$2.3 billion transportation plan. Business groups and economists have been warning us for years that transportation congestion was holding us back. Finally, we have a plan of action that enjoyed bipartisan support.

The plan provides statewide strategic benefits. It includes **restoring commuter rail in the**

New Haven-Hartford-Springfield line, renovation of the Danbury-New Canaan-Waterbury connection, new parking facilities, **a new station between Milford and New Haven**, and rehabilitating railcars for use on the Shore Line East-New Haven lines. It primarily focuses on rail transportation, but it also includes bus shuttle service to Bradley Airport, parking and rail station improvements, the planning and design work for **widening I-95 from Branford to Rhode Island**, and Long Island Sound port improvements to facilitate use for passenger and freight movement.

Rising revenues resulting from the existing gross receipts tax on petroleum products and federal funds will cover the costs without imposing new taxes.

POSTING OF GAS PRICES

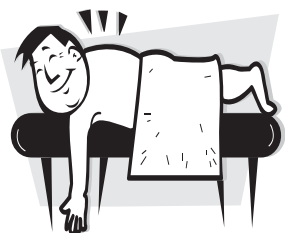
In an effort to protect consumers at the pump, from now on **both member and non-member prices must be posted** at service stations using the same size on signs advertising the price of gas or diesel. In addition, all prices such as full-serve, mini-serve and self-serve must be clearly visible at the pump.

SUMMER YOUTH EMPLOYMENT

This summer the state's five workforce investment boards have been directed to allocate more money towards expanding summer youth employment.

ORAL HEALTH CARE ACCESS

This year we increased the reimbursement rates for services to make it practical for dentists to provide dental services to HUSKY children.

**DIRECT ACCESS TO PHYSICAL THERAPISTS**

Physical therapists meeting certain standards will now be able to treat patients directly, without referral from another health care practitioner.

21ST CENTURY JOBS

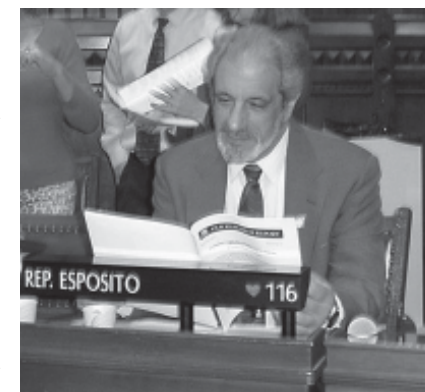
As we work on our infrastructure, we must also continue our focus on job creation and retention. **Our 21st Century Plan includes:**

- ◆ New tax credits for movie and digital media productions in Connecticut
- ◆ Elimination of the 15% corporation tax surcharge for 2007
- ◆ Elimination of the Manufacturing Machinery and Equipment property tax over five years to attract more manufacturing jobs
- ◆ A job creation tax credit for creating at least 50 new jobs

DISPLACED WORKER TAX CREDIT

To ensure a strong and prosperous workforce in Connecticut, the state will provide a new Displaced Worker Tax Credit. If a company hires a worker who was employed in Connecticut but let go as a direct result of business restructuring, that company can receive a **\$1,500 per worker** business tax credit.

Among other conditions, to receive the tax credit a company must pay an employee 75% of their previous annual wages for the first 12 months of employment and have no relation to the company from which the employee was terminated.

**HOUSING TAX CREDIT**

The Connecticut Housing Finance Authority received additional funding to improve and expand upon the Housing Tax Credit Program. Through this program **CHFA awards tax credits to businesses that contribute funds to nonprofit housing organizations** that develop low and moderate income housing.

INCOME TAX DEDUCTION FOR CONTRIBUTIONS TO CHET

Taxpayers will now be able to deduct their contributions to the Connecticut Higher Education Trust (CHET) from their Connecticut adjusted gross income for state income tax purposes. **Single filers can deduct up to \$5,000 whereas joint filers can deduct \$10,000.**

PROTECTION FOR SENIORS

Prior to passage of this legislation, injured workers eligible for workers' compensation had their Social Security retirement benefit deducted from the benefit. The offset was harmful to a population of senior citizens who, in most cases, are in the workplace because their Social Security benefits are insufficient to sustain a living. With this legislation, a senior citizen injured on the job would be eligible for their **rightful workers' compensation benefits** rather than being left to fall through the cracks.

MEDICAL NEWS

CO-PAY LIMITS ON IMAGING SERVICES

It was time to set some limits on co-payments for in-network MRIs, CAT scans and PET scans. As of October 1st, certain individual and group health insurance policies will be restricted to the following co-pay rules: (1) an annual **maximum of \$375 for all MRIs and CAT scans**, with a limit of \$75 per test, and (2) an annual **maximum of \$400 for PET scans, with a limit of \$100 per test.**

HOSPITAL ACQUIRED INFECTIONS

A critical step towards improving hospital safety was made with the passage of a law requiring the collection and **public disclosure of hospital infections.** Reporting infections will encourage more emphasis on prevention, which can save lives and reduce health care costs.

PROPERTY TAX EXEMPTION

After October 1st, **veterans' disability payments will no longer count as income** when determining eligibility for income-based property tax exemptions for veterans, the blind and people with total disabilities. Reservists or members of the CT National Guard, when performing duty under Title 32 of the United States Code, are now eligible for veterans' benefits. This is a small way to say "thank you" for the sacrifices you have made on our behalf.

**WARTIME SERVICE MEDALS**

Last year the legislature approved legislation which created a wartime service medal for all veterans who were residents of the state when called to active duty or are residents at the time of the award.

Eligible veterans may request awarding of the **Wartime Service Medal** by submitting an application form to the **Connecticut Department of Veterans Affairs.** For more information please go to the department's website at www.ct.gov/ctva or call 1-866-928-8387, Extension 5915.

LOWERING THE FLAG

Although most of us would assume the national flag would be lowered any time the state flag is lowered following the death of a member of the armed forces in the line of duty, it turns out there was no state or federal law dictating such policy. As of October 1st, the policy will clearly state that **the national flag will be flown at half-staff for the same period as the state flag** following the death of a member of the armed forces on active duty.

SALES TAX HOLIDAYS

MARK YOUR CALENDAR NOW

This year's **sales tax-free week** for clothing and footwear costing less than \$300 per item takes place **August 20th to August 26th.** Just in time for back-to-school shopping!

**SALES TAX HOLIDAY FOR ENERGY PRODUCTS**

We extended the "sales tax holiday" from **June 1, 2006 to June 30, 2007** for residential weatherization and energy efficient products and heating equipment. The exemption is on insulation, programmable thermostats, water heater blankets, window film, window and door weather strips, caulking, water heaters, gas furnaces, windows and doors that meet federal Energy Star standards, and oil furnaces that are at least 85% efficient. **Now is the time to think about energy home improvement projects!**